

Listing of Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A ball bat having a knob, a handle portion extending from the knob, a barrel portion extending from the handle portion, and an inflatable grip disposed on the handle portion, the inflatable grip comprising:

an inflatable tubular sleeve through which the handle portion extends;

an inflator in fluid communication with the inflatable tubular sleeve for pumping air into the inflatable tubular sleeve; and

a release valve in fluid communication with the inflatable tubular sleeve for releasing air from the inflatable tubular sleeve, the release valve extending through an end plug that snaps into the knob; and

a deflating ribbon in fluid communication between the release valve and the inflatable tubular sleeve.

Claim 2 (original): The ball bat according to claim 1 wherein the knob, handle portion and barrel portion are formed of metal.

Claim 3 (original): The ball bat according to claim 1 wherein the inflator is adhered to the handle portion or the barrel portion.

Claim 4 (original): The ball bat according to claim 3 further comprising an inflating ribbon in fluid communication between the inflator and the tubular sleeve.

Claims 5-7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (currently amended): The ball bat according to claim 7, 1 wherein the deflating ribbon passes through an opening between the handle portion and the knob.

Claim 9 (original): The ball bat according to claim 1 wherein the inflatable tubular sleeve comprises a plurality of air cells that are in fluid communication with each other.

Claim 10 (original): The ball bat according to claim 9 wherein the air cells are arranged in columns and rows.

Claim 11 (original): The ball bat according to claim 1 further comprising an overwrap disposed over the inflatable tubular sleeve.

Claim 12 (original): The ball bat according to claim 11 wherein the overwrap is spirally wound over the inflatable tubular sleeve.

Claim 13 (original): The ball bat according to claim 11 wherein the overwrap covers the inflator.

Claim 14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (currently amended): ~~The method according to claim 14~~ A method of manufacturing a ball bat comprising:

providing a bat body comprising a handle portion and a barrel portion;
providing an inflatable grip, the inflatable grip comprising an inflatable tubular sleeve and
an inflator and a release valve which are in fluid communication with the
inflatable tubular sleeve, wherein the release valve is connected to the inflatable
tubular sleeve by a deflating ribbon, and the method further comprises;
sliding the handle portion of the bat body through the inflatable sleeve;
adhering the inflator to the handle portion or the barrel portion of the bat body;
orienting the deflating ribbon in an opening defined by aligned notches formed in a knob
and the handle portion before the knob is attached to the handle portion of the
bat body;
attaching the knob to the handle portion of the bat body; and
securing the release valve to the knob.

Claim 16 (original): The method according to claim 15 wherein the knob comprises a collar and an end plug, and the method further comprises:

attaching the release valve to the end plug; and
joining the end plug to the collar.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The method according to claim 14 15 further comprising spirally winding an overwrap over the inflatable tubular sleeve.